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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces organizational development and describes its potential utility to the planning community. The paper first points out some current practices in educational planning that may violate principles of effective human behavior in educational organizations. The centralization of goal setting and decisionmaking and the failure to consider the motivational and political implications of information are examples of such violations. The paper then describes organizational development and concludes with an outline on how and where organizational development methods can be used in conjunction with educational planning. (JF)

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THE UTILITY OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT METHODS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

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THE UTILITY OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

METHODS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

This paper is organized into three parts. First, I point out some current practices in educational planning that may violate principles of effective human behavior in educational organizations. Second, I describe a method for making organizational processes more effective. This method is referred to as organization development or OD. Finally, and most importantly, I try to outline *how* and where OD methods can be used in conjunction with educational planning.

It is important to preface this paper with some qualifications. I do not pretend to be expert in both educational planning and organizational development. I have done some reading in the planning area and I do claim to know the field of organizational development. From reading the planning literature, however, it appears to me that OD methods are potentially useful to educational planners. Thus, the focus of the paper is not so much to criticize current educational planning, as it is to introduce OD and to describe its potential utility to the planning community.

As early as the 1930's, Karl Mannheim argued that planning is inevitable and that the only choice is between good and bad planning.[1] These are surely times in which accountability and planning are central themes. Educational planning, however, seems to be focused on the technology of planning rather than the effective use of the planning process in educational organizations. Planning is done by humans, and some current practices

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[1]see Karl Mannheim, Man and Society In An Age of Reconstruction (1940).

in educational planning violate important principles of how humans behave in organizations. It is my thesis that educational planners could profit by combining their methods with other technologies for coping with and motivating human behaviors if they want planning to carry on into action.

Educational Planning v. Some Principles of Effective Human Behavior in Educational Organizations

I agree with a rather straightforward definition of planning used by my colleagues at the Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration. Eidell and Nagle define planning in the following way:

> "planning refers to the development of a detailed prescription for doing or making something. It is concerned with the question of how to achieve a given end and it results in decisions about future activities."[2]

Depending on the particular model, most planning schemes include at least three stages. There is an objective-setting or information-generating stage in which the purposes of the organization are defined and structured. There is an analysis stage wherein certain planning tools and models are used to ascertain the weights of each objective and to examine alternatives, discrepancies and relationships. There is, at least implicitly stated, an implementation stage to put the plan into operation and to generate new data which serves to modify the planning process as it cycles back through the various stages.

It is in the objective setting and implementation stages that educational planners may violate some principles of effective human behavior in educational organizations. It is possible that being aware of these violations

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[2]Terry L. Eidell and John M. Nagle, "Conceptualization of PPBS and Data-Based Educational Planning." Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, April, 1970, p. 7.

may help educational planners to discover ways to set better organizational objectives and to develop plans which have a higher probability of being implemented.

The first principle of effective human behavior in educational organizations is that people are not really committed to decisions they have no part in making. The same psychology is true for goal setting. People do not automatically accept the goals of others. This is one reason there is so much subversion of the formal organizational goals by informal peer groups in organizations. It is important in educational planning that a way be found to involve all members of the organization in making decisions and setting goals that are appropriate to their own spheres of work. Involving people in this way facilitates the future implementation of the plan.

Many educational planning models propose a decision-making process that is concentrated solely at the top of the organization. Of course, those in authority must make decisions, but many planning models propose that the function of subordinates is merely to transfer information upwards so that the decisions can be made at the top. E. S. Quade, in discussing systems analysis for non-military planning, openly admits that systems and analysis may come more slowly to non-military organizations because the latter are "less controlled by the top."[3] This means that the power of the upper echelons to exact compliance from those below is very important in planning. This is also a point made by Aaron Wildavsky when he criticizes

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[3]E. S. Quade, "Systems Analysis Techniques for Planning-Programming-Budgeting," a working paper for the Rand Corporation, 1966, p. 26.

the non-military uses of PPBS.[4] Some educational planners even go so far as to hint that the most effective planning ignores subordinates. Schick argues, for example, that in PPBS the budgeting and analysis-planning dimensions should be separate because sobordinates in the "bowels of the organization," while they do have budgeting information, lack the insight and competence to do analysis.[5]

The second principle of effective human behavior in complex organizations is that subordinates attempt to liberate themselves as much as possible from organizational controls. Autonomy, a form of power, is the ability to resist organizational control. Jay points out that autonomy is one of the real pleasures of power.[6] Shepard feels that the underworld of informal organizational life (i.e., that which is important to worker peer groups but not officially approved) is spent trying to gain freedoms from the impositions of those higher in the hierarchy.[7] Anthony Downs sums up this psychological principle with what he calls the "law of counter control." It is:

> The greater the effort made by a sovereign or top-level official to control the behavior of subordinate officials, the greater the efforts made by those subordinates to evade or counteract such control.[8]

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[4]Aaron Wildavsky, "Rescuing Policy Analysis from PPBS," The Congressional Record, 27-877, 1969, vol. 3.

[5]Allen Schick, "Systems for Analysis: PPB and Its Alternatives," The Congressional Record, 27-877, 1969, vol. 3, pp. 820-21.

[6]Anthony Jay, Management and Machiavelli (1967), p. 38.

[7]Herbert A. Shepard, "Innovation-Resisting and Innovation-Producing Organizations," in Bennis, Benne and Chin, The Planning of Change, (1969), p. 520.

[8]Anthony Downs, Inside Bureaucracy (1967), p. 147.

Autonomy is one facet of organizational life which is very common to school systems. In school studies in both Chicago and Boston, researchers have found a very high amount of organizational autonomy among principals and department directors.[9]

The power of hoarded information (the motivation for which is the desire to be free from controls) is an important reason that the centralization of information, a feature of many schemes for systematic planning, is resisted by organizational members who have built up their own private hoards. For example, I recently did research in a school system in one of the major cities on the East Coast. A data processing center had been established in that system in 1963. I discovered that the center had on its tapes only some accounting information, some demographic data, IQ scores, achievement test scores, the courses pupils are taking and have taken, and the records on student grades. All other kinds of information needed for planning were conspicuously absent. Some interviewing revealed that department directors and principals refuse to share information so that it can be stored. After seven years, the data processing center remains a small operation off in the basement of one of the technical high schools.

Crozier also discovered, in studying two public bureaus in France,[10] that one of the keys to sobordinate autonomy or freedom is the way subordinates are able to hoard scarce information. If they can create conditions

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[9]See Morris Janowitz, Institution Building in Urban Education (1969), and C. Brooklyn Derr, "An Organizational Analysis of the Boston School Department," Ed.D Thesis, Harvard Graduate School of Education (1971).

[10]Michel Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon (1965), pp. 160-181. See also Richard E. Walton, "Two Strategies of Social Change and Their Dilemmas," in Bennis, Benne, Chin, op. cit., pp. 167-175.

of uncertainty by their possession of information, they become quite indispensable. Thus, information is power and most organizational members at lower levels know this, at least intuitively. They are not eager to surrender freely their scarce information, for as soon as they do, they are likely to provide those above with further power and make their own positions more vulnerable.

Information hoarding resulting from the desire to be free from organizational controls, has implications for educational planning. Among other things, the fact provides us with another rationale for involving subordinates in decision making and goal setting. Involvement would tend to remove one of the motivations for subordinates to hoard their information. A subordinate could, as an alternative strategy, exchange the power he derives from information hoarding for the influence he would gain from being involved in decision making and goal setting. In other words, he could trade some autonomy for influence. The decision would benefit from the access to more information.

Another aspect of the hoarding of information is that information exchange must also be considered a motivational problem by educational planners. In educational planning, much attention is given to the technology of information. Establishing adequate criteria for performance and determining cost effectiveness and other measures as selection criteria are examples of some of the most important problems facing the nation's educational system. It is no longer defensible to respond to questions about scarce resources with excuses typically used in the past. However, obtaining and using information is also a motivational problem. Implementation of the plan does not completely depend upon a more extensive and up-to-date

system of management information. The state of readiness of the data files may depend as much on the willingness of subordinates to render accurate and complete information as it does on the ability of technicians in the system to organize and store the data.

Therefore, educational planning frequently violates two principles of effective human behavior in organizations. By centralizing decision making and objective setting, planning foregoes subordinate commitment to organizational decisions and goals. This eventually weakens the chances for successful implementation of the plan. It also inhibits the free exchange of valuable information. By focusing on the technology of information and by stressing organizational control, educational planners ignore the importance of subordinate resistance to control by hoarding scarce information. Information is power and it is unlikely that it will be freely surrendered by the subordinates without something in return. Decentralizing the objective setting stage of educational planning would help to facilitate the exchange of subordinate autonomy for subordinate influence. An improved information flow--and better decisions--might result. The implementation stage would also be favorably affected by the increased commitment of subordinates to the educational objectives.

Organizational Development

Organizational development is a method of intervening in the processes of organizations for the purpose of planning relevant organizational changes. Organization development typically involves the following kinds of activities: getting together an OD team composed of the right combination of expertise; entering the organization and negotiating the organizational

change contract in such a way that there is maximum opportunity to use the OD methods; collecting data; diagnosing the organizational problems; feeding back the data to the client for joint action-planning; deciding with the client on the most appropriate change intervention; and sustaining the intervention until such a time that the client has developed his own capacity for organizational change and is ready to sever his relationship with the OD specialists.

To understand what OD does and how it can prove to be useful for educational planners, a clear understanding of its purpose is essential. The over-all goal of OD is to change the culture of a living system so that the organization becomes "self-renewing." Self-renewing organizations are adaptive in the long run; hence, they are not set in any single organizational structure or procedure. While there is typically some formal hierarchy, organizational form follows function. People are organized into groups to solve specific problems; both the structure of the organization and the methods used in the groups change to suit the nature of the current problems. In a self-renewing educational organization, for example, planning would be done by problem-solving groups at all levels of the organization. The planner would not be concerned that a perfect model be followed; rather, he would be most concerned that all group members were operating within the framework of the plan and that they were using effective methods.

In self-renewing organizations, decisions are made by persons who have the information. Instead of being preoccupied with identifying the decision makers according to who has legitimate authority, emphasis is placed on the best possible decision. Decision making requires adequate information; all too often, those in authority simply lack the information

or have it in distorted form because, as we stated earlier, subordinates use their scarce information to obtain and maintain power.

The implications of this aspect of self-renewing organization for educational planning are that the planning function would be decentralized. That is, instead of building an organization which generated all of the information upwards so that those at the top could choose between several alternatives, an organization would be designed such that decisions were made where the information is. Some examples of this for educational organizations might be the following. A group of students, parents, and teachers might decide on the textbooks to be used in a particular grade level. Principals would have the right to have a say about the kind of in-service training they would receive. The central office would make some district-wide policy decisions and be very much a part of most decisions, but no central group would be empowered to make decisions for others when those others were the ones to be affected by the decision. The planners, of course, would have to be in on all the far-reaching decisions.

In self-renewing organizations, there are sensing processes and feedback mechanisms to tell when changes are needed. There would be, for example, very open communication between the planners and the rest of the organization so that the plan could be adjusted according to accurate feedback about changes in the environment. This seems to already be a feature of many planning models. Self-renewing organizations are also managed according to specified goals accepted by all the members. The organization learns systematic methods (e.g., problem-solving techniques) for dealing with obstacles to reaching these goals. The goals, naturally, are subject to change as the environment of the school district changes, but planners in

a self-renewing organization could count on possessing a set of objectives arrived at by group consensus which would be "owned" by the whole organization. This may enhance the potential for implementing the plan because the group members would already be committed to the goals and the performance objectives which would be chosen by decision-makers and planners as the objects of the planning process.

Finally, in self-renewing organizations there is a culture or climate which permits the features mentioned above to take place. There is open, direct, and clear communication. Conflict is viewed as inevitable and natural and is brought out and managed so that it can be used creatively instead of impeding the work to be accomplished. Creativity, even wild dreaming, is encouraged. New ideas and new persons and groups are seen as additional resources rather than as trouble makers and threats. A climate of trust is developed wherein people more willingly exchange information.

Those are the goals of organization development. However, such an ideal state might seem very difficult to attain. What are some of the OD methods used to help organizations become self-renewing?

Program 30 at the Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, CASEA, at the University of Oregon, has systematically developed a technology called "laboratory training for organizational development" which attempts to develop self-renewing organizations. There are other OD technologies available, but the CASEA methods exemplify the use of the OD methodology. Typically, organizational training as practiced at CASEA uses three major stages to bring into operation a more self-renewing school organization:

Stage 1: Improving Communication Skills. Functions within schools, as in all other organizations, are "carried" through interpersonal interactions. Typically, human beings in organizations lack skill in communicating clearly and succinctly. In the first phase of organizational training, members of a school or district improve their discussions about interpersonal or interrole problems by simultaneously practicing new ways of communicating. The first step, then, is to build increased openness and ease of interpersonal communication among the participants by training them in the skills of paraphrasing, describing behavior, describing own feelings, and checking their perceptions of others' feelings. The intervention aims to develop skillful, constructive openness; by doing so, it helps the staff develop increased confidence that communication can have worthwhile outcomes.

Improving communication also improves the potential for planning in an educational organization. It increases the openness so that more information is exchanged. It facilitates interpersonal relations such that information is not used deviously (e.g., hoarding, blackmail, sabotage) between persons who dislike one another. It improves the quality of the information exchanged so that the planner can be confident that the data messages he has received are really those which were sent.

Stage 2: Changing Norms. After increasing communication skills, the next step is to build new norms that support interpersonal openness and helpfulness among the members of the group being trained. As a lever with which to change group norms, we can use the desires of the participants to ameliorate some of their actual problems. For example, we often invite the faculty of a school to state some frustrations they are encountering in the school and to practice a sequence of problem-solving steps to reduce

these frustrations. An activity like this can lead to reduced frustrations and to the satisfaction of knowing that others value the contribution one has made to organizational problem solving. Changes in organizational norms of openness and candor can occur because staff members find themselves behaving in new ways in their actual work-groups.

Changing norms is also important for educational planning. If a climate of trust and openness can be achieved in a school district, it will then be much easier to plan. Superiors will be more trusting of subordinates when they ask them to join in organizational decision making and goal setting. They will value their opinions much more than in a patronizing system where the boss is told what he wants to hear. Subordinates will in turn feel useful and be more apt to make better use of their resources. They will also trust superiors and be more willing to give up their personal autonomy power to become involved in organizational issues. Our research at CASEA supports these assertions.[11]

Stage 3: Structural Change. The culminating phase of organizational training builds into the organizational structure new functions, roles, procedures, and policies. The new structures should become part of the fabric of the school organization. They should be formal and institutionalized with budgetary support. For example, at CASEA we are presently working with two elementary schools helping them change their organizational structure from a traditionally self-contained classroom form to a team teaching

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[11]See Philip J. Runkel and Richard A. Schmuck, Organizational Training In A School Faculty, Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1970.

mode of organization. Using OD methods, we are helping the teams work effectively together. Each team is becoming a planning unit of its own. Teams identify their teaching objectives within the framework of system constraints. They decide how to use their resources to meet those objectives, and they examine the forces which will facilitate or restrain them from implementing the plan. They then make plans to surmount the restraining forces. When they have finished the process, they have produced a set of action plans to which there is a high degree of commitment and in which all of the team members have a part in implementing. The team leader then acts as a "linking pin" to present the goals and plans to the principal. A planning team comprised of the principal and the team leaders then makes plans for the whole school. The plans which result are usually both realistic and enthusiastically supported by the entire school staff.

Utility of OD Methods for Educational Planning

It is proposed that organizational development is potentially useful in conjunction with educational planning methods to create effective educational organizations. The following propositions explain where and how OD can be useful.

Proposition 1: OD methods can be used to help the organization identify the objectives to which its members are really committed.

An OD objective-setting workshop might take place prior to the setting of objectives phase of planning. The planner could then compare the formal organizational objectives with the objectives of the members. He could, where possible, opt for the alternatives to which the members would really be committed (i.e., their objectives). Planning based on objectives to

which members of the organization are already committed, would certainly enhance the implementation stage of planning.

Proposition 2: OD methods can be used to change norms and build a climate of trust in the organization such that better planning information is exchanged.

One result of working on communication skills, for example, is that increased openness results as the skills are improved. Openness makes for improved interpersonal relations. When new norms of support, constructive feedback, and helpfulness are then introduced, a general climate of trust pervades the organization. This climate, it is proposed, could help planners to obtain more and better information.

Proposition 3: The OD method can be used to effectively decentralize decision-making without destroying authority relationships so that subordinates will give more information (autonomy) in exchange for influence.

In an OD program, those in authority are encouraged to manage their own jurisdiction, not to try to be all pervasive in the organization, to manage everything but nothing very well. At CASEA, we have found that principals, department directors, superintendents, and even teachers have a propensity for meddling in the organizational affairs of subordinates and peers. As a result, they sometimes do a poor job of managing, for such a strategy is impractical. A special part of OD training teaches leaders to trust their subordinates to make appropriate decisions. It teaches subordinates that there are some decisions those in authority must make. It teaches peers to be helpful but not to meddle in one another's affairs when it is not appropriate.

Using OD techniques for decentralizing decision-making has implications for educational planning. The planner would have to learn to adapt

his models to different hierarchical levels. That is, there would be a range of planning or organizational parameters within which those at the various levels could make choices appropriate to their jurisdictions. Within these parameters, the various work groups and decision-makers could generate their own problem solutions and action plans. As a result of this approach, however, it is expected that better decisions would result. Decisions would be made where the information is. A decentralized form of decision-making assures subordinates of appropriate influence. Such assurance would naturally encourage them to share their information more willingly. Thus, more information as well as better information would result from building a climate of trust and decentralizing decision-making.[12]

Proposition 4: The OD method can be used to help the educational planner develop better rapport with those who work in the organization.

Presently, many planners are negatively viewed by persons in the organization. One teacher told me:

> Whenever Mr. X from the Educational Planning Center comes around, I clam up. He is snooping around to find ways to cut my budget or make things more inconvenient.

Instead of being perceived as a spy, a manipulator of the system, or a person who is out to destroy one's ability to be effective, the educational planner could be seen as an important member of the educational team. OD methods could be used for the planner to express his needs, purposes and resources to the rest of the school system.

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[12]The importance of decentralizing decisions in educational planning has already been recognized by some educational planners. See Eidell and Nagle, op. cit.

Proposition 5: The OD method can provide the kind of general organizational climate or culture in which planning can operate more effectively.

After using the OD method in school organizations, it has been our experience at CASEA to witness more involvement on the part of teachers and administrators. Open and clear communication prevails. A plan in which the members themselves have been involved, is perceived by the whole organization as an important, working agreement to which organizational members gear their efforts.

Summary

Some aspects of current educational planning which violate principles of effective human organization have been criticized. The centralization of goal setting and decision-making and the failure to consider the motivational and political implications of information have been especially pointed out as examples of such violations. Organizational development as a vital part of the technology of organizational change has been explained. It was suggested that OD, together with systems planning, should go far to improve educational organizations.